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May 29, 2009

The Honorable Peter DeVries, Chair  
Washington State Building Code Council  
P.O. Box 42525  
Olympia, WA 98504-2525

Dear Chairman :

Washington State relies on innovation and a quality environment to attract businesses and build thriving communities. The state energy code has played a positive role in reducing energy expenditures in individual buildings and enabling utilities to forgo electric generation projects that would have increased cost for all ratepayers. This keeps our businesses competitive and enhances housing affordability.

As we start to experience the significant impacts of climate change in Washington, we must take action to reduce emissions and grow a green economy. The Climate Action Team (CAT), created through Executive Order 07-02, developed an extensive list of recommendations in their November 2008 report "Leading the Way: Implementing Practical Solutions to the Climate Change Challenge." Two complementary actions are included for the Washington State Energy Code in "Recommendation 3: State Energy Code Improvements and Establishment of 2030 Building Goals."

Part 1. In the 2009 Washington State Building Code adoption cycle, revise the Washington State Energy Code (WSEC) to achieve a 30 percent reduction in new building energy use compared to the 2007 edition of the WSEC.

Part 2. Provide policy direction in the development and implementation of a long term building energy efficiency and carbon reduction strategy. This includes setting targets for building energy efficiency and carbon reduction through 2030.

I respectfully request the State Building Code Council (SBCC) move to implement the CAT objective included in Part 1. To create a future where efficient buildings are a meaningful portion of the building population, improved efficiency standards need to be implemented as soon as possible. For Washington State, this process should begin with full consideration of a 30 percent improvement in the state energy code during the 2009 building code adoption cycle. As you examine the technical and economic feasibility of new standards, please consider those who will occupy these buildings 10 or 20 years from now and adopt policies that ensure their homes and commercial buildings will serve them well, as the nation addresses the climate impacts of the built environment.





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The state Legislature has provided the policy direction and goal setting described in Part 2 by passing Senate Bill 5854. This bill sets long term planning and implementation goals to construct increasingly energy efficient structures so we are building zero fossil-fuel greenhouse gas emission homes and buildings by the year 2031.

We have a great opportunity to reduce the cost of operating our infrastructure while further developing our professional energy efficiency workforce. Developing the standards for Washington's next generation of buildings will improve our competitiveness in the new economy.

I offer my heartfelt thanks to you and the members of the SBCC for your dedication to improving building safety and efficiency in Washington State.

Sincerely,



Christine O. Gregoire  
Governor